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TAGS: PREL PGOV EAID AF AE  
SUBJECT: UAE PERSPECTIVES ON AFGHAN ELECTIONS

REF: A) STATE 63551, B) ABU DHABI 616, C) 08 ABU DHABI 1370

Classified by CDA Douglas Greene, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) MFA Assistant Minister for Political Affairs Ambassador Tariq al-Haidan acknowledged ref A points and President Obama's statement that the USG has no favored candidate in the Afghan elections in a June 22 meeting, but pressed the Charge to clarify who the U.S. is really backing. He noted that Iran has expressed support for Karzai and assumed perhaps Washington and Tehran had an odd confluence of interests in a Karzai win. The Charge emphasized the USG position as stated reftel that the Afghan people need to make their own determination. Al-Haidan again pressed to know our real intent -- adding that Karzai had the upper hand (he is "riding the horse" while the other candidates are "on foot").

¶2. (C) Al-Haidan said the UAE planned to reinforce U.S. efforts in Afghanistan (including through its military commitment there) and would not interfere in the elections (though he hinted that the Saudis have a favored candidate or two, and might use their influence to support them). (Comment: In separate conversation, DATT heard from the armed forces that the UAE wishes to deploy a battalion sized light armored infantry force of perhaps 500 Emirati land forces troops to support the upcoming elections in Afghanistan. Coordination of this "Task Force 110" will continue in hopes of being mission capable in early August. End comment.) Regarding a potentially broader Arab force to bolster the UAE contingent in Afghanistan, al-Haidan confided that Morocco was "not energetic" on the idea (does not want to be "too close to NATO") but that discussions were also underway with Jordan. He was uncertain of the outcome.

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